

ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY

20 June 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: CIA Management Committee

SUBJECT : Use of Sanctions for Language Development

1. The Language Development Committee (LDC) has studied the possibility of stimulating language development in the Agency through the use of sanctions, i.e., requiring employees to attain a specified level of proficiency in a foreign language before being promoted to a stipulated grade. The Department of State introduced such a program in 1963 and reports that it has been effective in increasing the number of language assets in the Foreign Service. Yet, the recently published GAO Report indicates that there has been no significant improvement in filling language-essential positions with language-qualified personnel at State. In other words, even though the absolute number of language speakers increased, language sanctions did not succeed in increasing the number of qualified personnel in language-essential positions. This is, however, more a critique of management than a failure of the sanctions program.

STATINTL

2. Although the LDC has in the past been more favorably disposed to the use of language program sanctions, the members now feel that sanctions should not be adopted by the Agency at this time. With the publication of a revised regulation [REDACTED], the LDC has abandoned the requirements approach to language development in favor of a system of language goals. We are only now receiving the Agency's proposed language goals and are not yet in a position to evaluate the effect this approach will have on the Language Development Program (LDP).

3. The Annual Language Development Program report to the Director is due at the close of FY 73. It will be a significant report -- reflecting the greatest loss in language skills at any time in the Agency's history. This event converges with two other developments:

a. The receipt of the Directorates' new language positions requirements reflecting goals rather than hard "must-be-filled" positions with appropriately qualified linguists. (The annual post-audit will tell top management how well goals are being met.)

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b. The LDC program to permit delinquent personnel only 90 days to be tested or to disclaim the 1,000 plus untested skills claims. This will at last give us a definitive tested data base.

4. For these reasons the position of the Directorate representatives to the LDC and the Chief of the Language School against sanctions at this time is a persuasive argument. The LDC membership feel that officers should be given an opportunity at the beginning of a career to develop a language skill in line with Agency needs. In addition it is the LDC view that language competence should continue to be a major consideration in the deliberation of career management boards and that the revised language regulation abandoning the requirements approach in favor of a system of language goals should be given a longer trial period. The spirit of the revised regulation, which consciously moves away from "punitive" measures against Directorates for failure to properly fill language positions should not be replaced by potentially "punitive" action against the individual officer.

5. As Chairman of the LDC I accept the collective wisdom of the Committee but do not fully share it. I am less sanguine of the anticipated results of our collective good will and voluntary efforts. I base my views on watching this program for six years. Not even mentioned in any depth in the LDC deliberations has been the question of how we would identify those on whom we would apply sanctions and the system of surveillance and reporting. Doing this will not be easy and may, in fact, be the major stumbling block; yet, this is something I would not mind tackling.

6. In sum, I recommend this matter not be laid to rest and that the LDC review our progress during the remainder of this year and report again specifically on the application of sanctions by 15 December 1973.

Alfonso Rodriguez
Chairman
Language Development Committee

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